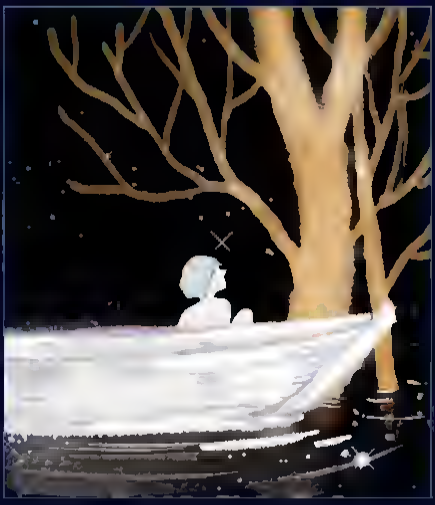
THERE WAS ONLY WATER.

CLEAR, BLACK WATER FILLED THE NIGHT SKY.

THERE WAS A LITTLE BOAT
FLOATING ACROSS THE WATER,

AND ON THIS BOAT THERE LIVED A SMALL BOY.



THE BOY HAD A FRIEND.

IT WAS A TREE.

THE TREE CONSTANTLY SPOKE OF A WORLD
WHICH THE CHILD HAD NEVER SEEN.

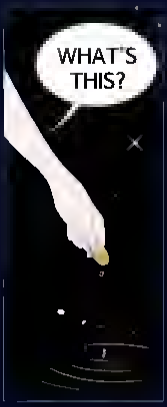
REALLY?
I'D LIKE TO SEE IT.
THAT'S RIGHT, AI. SOMEDAY YOU WILL GET TO VISIT IT TOO.

THE BOY WAS SO LONELY.

HE HAD THE TREE AS A COMPANION,
BUT PART OF HIM FELT EMPTY INSIDE.

AND THEN ONE DAY,

A SMALL, PRETTY PEBBLE WHICH HE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE FLOATED TO THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.



HE WOULD OFTEN REMEMEER IT LATER.

THE BOY COULD FEEL THE SADNESS EURIED INSIDE THE PEEELE.

EVERY TIME HE TOUCHED IT, HE WOULD CRY.

AND EACH TIME A PEEELE FLOATED TO THE SURFACE, HE WOULD SCOOP IT OUT OF THE WATER AND KEEP IT IN HIS BOAT.

I WANT TO SEE WHERE THESE PEBBLES ARE COMING FROM.

MAYBE THE PERSON SENDING THEM IS ASKING ME FOR HELP. I WANT TO HELP THEM.

THEN LISTEN, AL.
I WANT YOU TO PROMISE ME SOMETHING.
YOU MUST NEVER LEAVE THE WATER. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES, TREE.
I PROMISE.

THE SMALL BOY DOVE INTO THE WATER.

AS SOON AS THE TREE BREATHED INTO HIM,

HE WAS ABLE TO BREATHE.

DEEPER,

AND DEEPER

THE CHILD WENT,

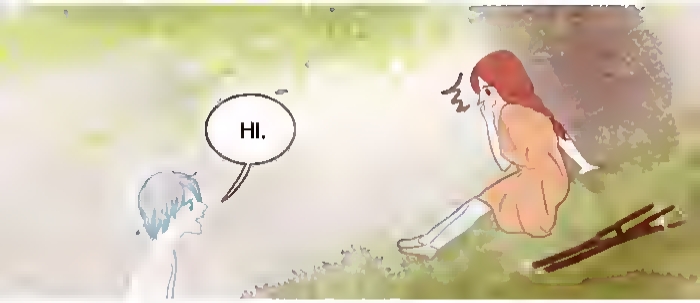
INTO THE DARKNESS.

THE BOY WAS DAZZLED BY THE SIGHT OF A GREEN TREE.

THEN HE SAW A GIRL WHO WAS KNEELING
NEXT TO THE TREE AND PRAYING.

THE GIRL'S NAME WAS "NENA."

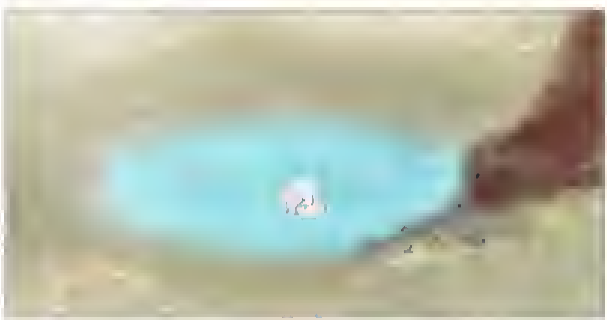
WHEN SHE FINISHED HER PRAYERS AND OPENED HER EYES,



SHE WAS SO SURPRISED TO SEE
THE BOY IN THE WATER THAT SHE RAN AWAY.

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY MET.

EVERY DAY AFTER THAT,
THE BOY FLOATED AROUND IN THE WATER
WAITING FOR THE GIRL.



BUT SHE OIO NOT COME.

NOR OIO ANY MORE PEBBLES FLOAT TO THE SURFACE.

THE BOY WAS SO SAD.

HE WAS SAO BECAUSE HE WAS LONELY,

BY HIMSELF,

ALL ALONE.

AND THAT'S WHEN THE GIRL APPEARED AGAIN.

SHE ASKED THE BOY.

YOU'RE AN ELF, AREN'T YOU? DID YOU HEAR MY PRAYERS?
...I'M SORRY. I'M NOT AN ELF. BUT EVERY TIME I PICKED ONE OF THESE OUT OF THE WATER, I REALLY WANTED TO SEE YOU.

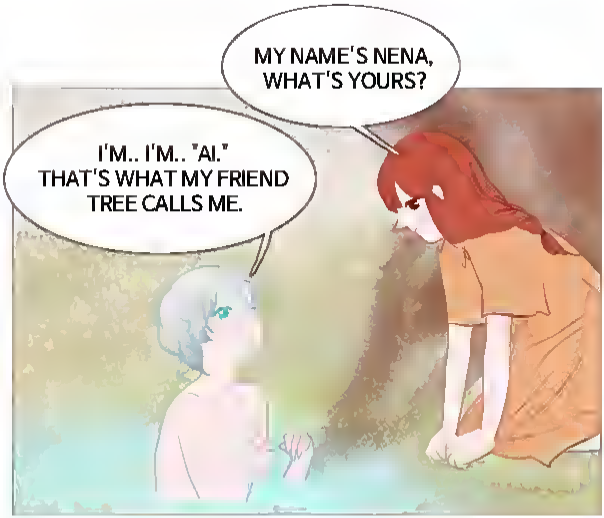
THE GIRL BEGAN TO CRY.

SHE RESENTED THE ELF WHO HAD
FAILED TO HEAR HER PRAYERS.

AND UPON SEEING THE GIRL'S TEARS,
THE EOY ALSO STARTED CRYING.

THE TWO OF THEM SAT THERE FACING
EACH OTHER AND CRYING.

THIS IS HOW THEY BECAME FRIENDS.



THAT'S WHEN HE REALIZED.

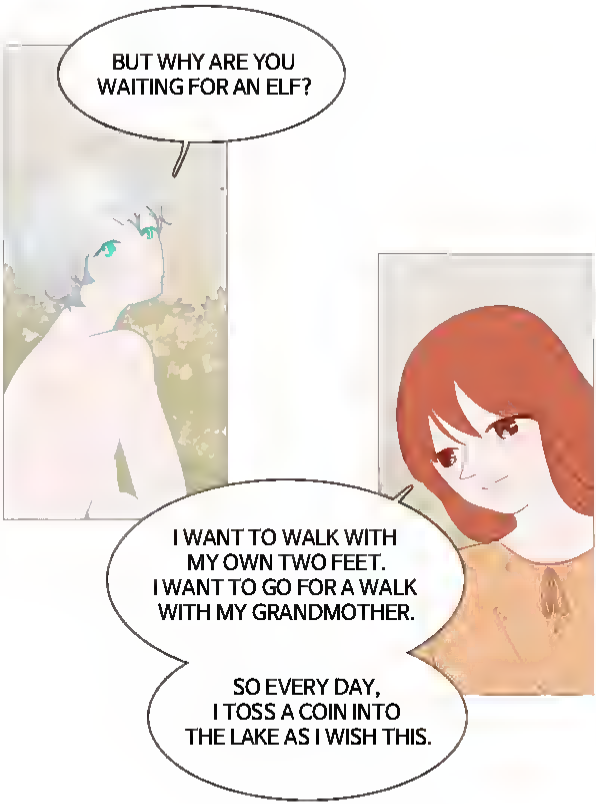
THE BOY WAS SO OVERWHELMED BY THIS NEW SENSATION

THAT HE BURST INTO TEARS ONCE AGAIN.

AFTER THAT, THE TWO OF THEM MET EVERY DAY.
THEY WOULD TALK AEOUT ANYTHING THEY WANTED,
SOMETIMES EOISTEROUS WITH EXCITEMENT,
AND SOMETIMES QUIETLY WHISPERING IN EACH OTHER'S EARS.

THE EOY ENJOYED EVERY SINGLE DAY,
AND WAS ALWAYS SAD WHEN SHE HAD TO GO EECAUSE
TIME FELT LIKE IT WAS FLOWING TOO QUICKLY.

THE EOY LIKED NENA.


BUT WHY ARE YOU WAITING FOR AN ELF?
I WANT TO WALK WITH MY OWN TWO FEET. I WANT TO GO FOR A WALK WITH MY GRANDMOTHER.
SO EVERY DAY, I TOSS A COIN INTO THE LAKE AS I WISH THIS.

THE BOY WAS SAD WHEN NENA TOLO HIM THIS.

HE WAS GLOOMY EVEN AFTER RETURNING TO HIS BOAT.

HE FELT SORRY FOR HIMSELF.

THE BOY WANTEO TO LOOK FOR AN ELF,
JUST LIKE NENA. HE WANTEO TO FINO ONE ANO MAKE A WISH.

IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THAT
THE BOY'S CHEST SUDDENLY BEGAN TO FEEL ITCHY.

HE FELT SDMETHING CDMING UP HIS THRDAT.

THE BDY CDVERED HIS MDUTH WITH HIS HANDS AND CDUGHED.

THEN HE THREW UP A SMALL LUMP.

IT WAS A BRIGHTLY SHINING SEED.

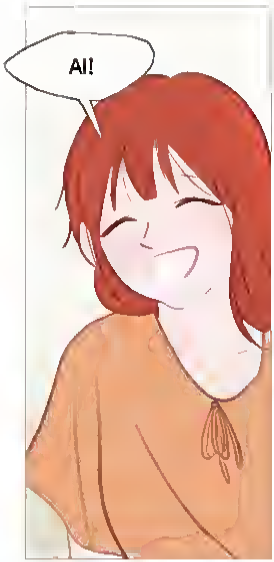
...WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S A SMALL SEED,
AND IT'S PART DF YDU.
IT FELL DUT DF YDUR BDDY
BECAUSE YDU WANTED
SDMETHING VERY BADLY.
DOES THAT MEAN
I CAN DO WHAT I WANT?
WILL NENA BE ABLE TO WALK
IF I GIVE HER THIS?
THAT'S
RIGHT.

BUT YOU MUST GET IT BACK ON THE DAY WHEN THE SUN AND MOON CHANGE TEN TIMES.
OTHERWISE, YOU WILL BE IN GRAVE DANGER.
...I WOULD RATHER YOU DO NOT HELP NENA. I'M WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOT GET THE SEED BACK.

IT'S ALRIGHT. I KNOW NENA, AND I'M SURE SHE'LL GIVE ME THE SEED BACK.

THE BOY SWAM THROUGH THE WATER TO GET TO NENA.

HE KEPT THE SHINING SEED NEAR HIS HEART.



NENA WAS EVEN
MORE BEAUTIFUL THAT DAY.

THE EDY WANTED
TD SEE NENA SMILE EVEN
MDRE ERIGHTLY, SD HE GAVE
HER THE SEED FIRST.

HEARING WHAT THE EDY HAD SAID,
NENA TDDK THE SEED AND HELD IT UP.

AT THAT MDMENT, HER LEGS EECAME STRDNGER AND
SHE CDULD FEEL THEM FILLING WITH PDWER.

SHE IMMEDIATELY STOOD UP.
SHE STARED AT HER LEGS IN DISBELIEF THAT
SHE WAS STANDING ON HER OWN.

BUT NENA.
YOU HAVE TO GIVE ME
BACK THAT SEED ON THE DAY
WHEN THE SUN AND THE MOON
CHANGE TEN TIMES.

OTHERWISE
I WON'T BE ABLE TO LIVE.

I SEE. DON'T WORRY, I'LL GIVE IT BACK. THANK YOU SO MUCH.
THANK YOU.

THANK YOU..

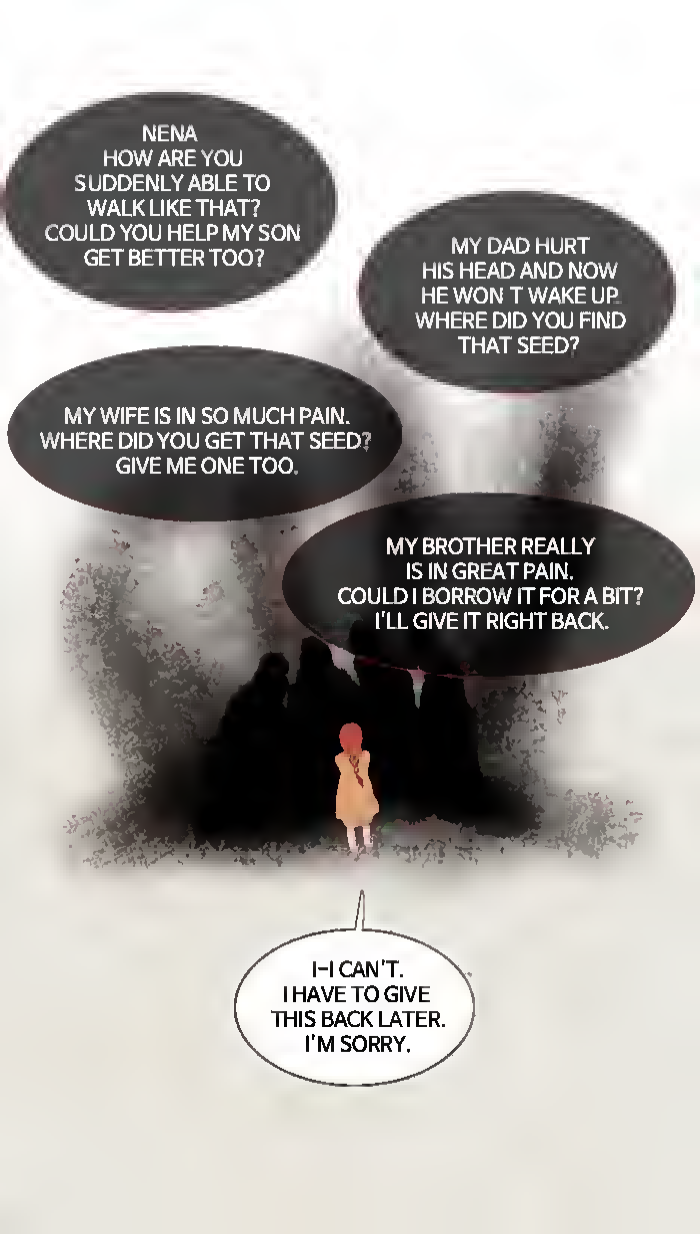
NENA RAN STRAIGHT TO HER GRANOMOTHER TO SHOW HER.

THE GRANOMOTHER WAS SO OVERWHELMEO
WITH EMOTION THAT SHE HELO NENA IN
HER ARMS ANO STARTEO CRYING.
SEEING THIS, NENA ALSO BEGAN TO CRY WITH HER

AFTER THAT, NENA WENT DN WALKS
WITH HER GRANDMDTHER,
HELPED HER IN THE FIELD AND SPENT
EVERY DAY IN PURE HAPPINESS.

BUT AS THE VILLAGERS WATCHED NENA,
THEY GRADUALLY BEGAN TO CHANGE.

THEN THEY APPROACHED HER.


NENA
HOW ARE YOU
SUDDENLY ABLE TO
WALK LIKE THAT?
COULD YOU HELP MY SON
GET BETTER TOO?
MY DAD HURT
HIS HEAD AND NOW
HE WON T WAKE UP.
WHERE DID YOU FIND
THAT SEED?
MY WIFE IS IN SO MUCH PAIN.
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT SEED?
GIVE ME ONE TOO.
MY BROTHER REALLY
IS IN GREAT PAIN.
COULD I BORROW IT FOR A BIT?
I'LL GIVE IT RIGHT BACK.
I-I CAN'T.
I HAVE TO GIVE
THIS BACK LATER.
I'M SORRY.

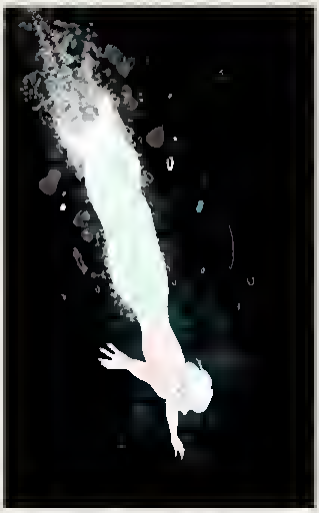
NENA RAN AWAY FROM EVERYONE.
BUT THEY ANGRILY CHASED AFTER HER.

ANO THEN, BEFORE THE MOON HAD
CHANGEO FOR THE TENTH TIME,

SHE SNUCK OUT OF THE VILLAGE ANO WENT TO THE BOY.

AVOIOING THE PRYING EYES OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE,

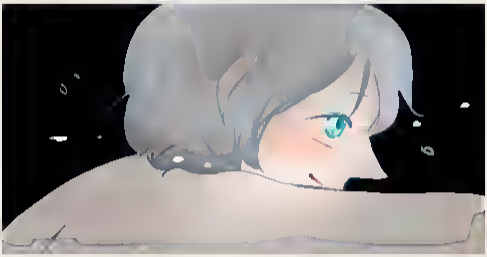
SHE QUICKLY ANO STEALTHILY RAN THROUGH THE FOREST.



AT THE SAME TIME,
THE BOY WAS SWIMMING
THROUGH THE WATER TO
GET THE SEED BACK.

HE SWAM AS QUICKLY
AS HE COULD AND WAVED
HIS ARMS WILDLY

BECAUSE HE DESPERATELY
WANTED TO SEE NENA.

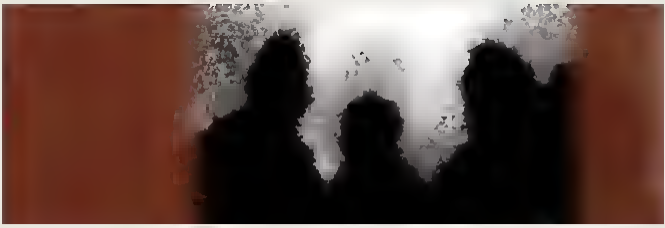


"I BET NENA HAS GOTTEN EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL."

THE BOY'S FACE WAS ALREADY
COVERED WITH A BEAMING SMILE.

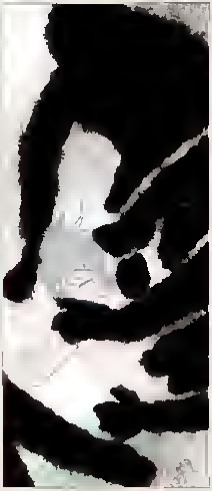
AS SOON AS
HE SWAM TO THE SURFACE
OF THE WATER,
HE SAW NENA'S FACE.

AND THERE WERE ALSO STRANGE SHADOWS BEHIND HER WHICH HE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE.



THE VILLAGERS VIOLENTLY PULLED THE BOY OUT OF THE WATER, AS IF THEY HAD BEEN WAITING FOR HIM.

THEN THEY TIED HIM UP SO THAT HE COULD NOT ESCAPE.



NO!!
LET HIM GO!

MY CHILD IS SO SICK. CAN YOU GIVE ME A SEED TOO?
NO. ME FIRST! I NEED TO HELP MY DAD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? OBVIOUSLY MY WIFE NEEDS IT FIRST!

THE VILLAGERS WENT INTO A WILO FRENZY.

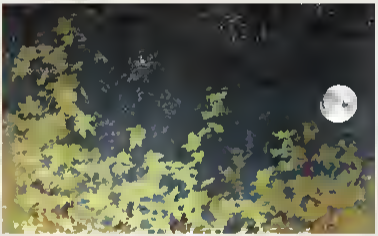
THEY WERE SCRATCHING AT
THE EOY'S EOOY LIKE WILO ANIMALS.

NENA THREW HERSELF AT THEM ANO KNOCKEO THEM OVER.

THEN SHE GRABBEO THE EOY'S HANO ANO
TRIEO TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM.

S-STOP IT..!!
THAT'S ENOUGH!!!
AI! GET UP!
WE HAVE TO RUN!
COME ON!

THE BOY COULD NOT STAND UP. NENA LOOKED UP AT THE SKY AND SAW THE MOON HANGING BRIGHTLY OVER THE MOUNTAINS.



THERE WAS NO TIME.

IN ORDER TO SAVE THE BOY, NENA TOOK THE SEED OUT OF HER POCKET.

THE VILLAGERS RAN AT HER TO TRY TO TAKE THE SEED.

AND SHE PUT THE SEED IN THE BOY'S HAND BEFORE THEY COULD REACH HER.

NENA LOST ALL OF THE STRENGTH IN HER LEGS AND FELL TO THE GROUND,

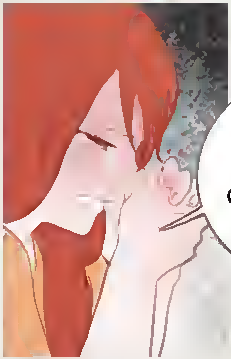
AND AS THE BOY'S BODY BEGAN TO GLOW BRIGHTLY AS IT ABSORBED THE SEED

BUT THE VILLAGERS MOVED MORE QUICKLY THAN EXPECTED.

LIKE WOLVES THAT HAVE OISCOVEREO PREY,
THEY POUNCEO ON THE BOY'S BOOY.
AMONG THEIR CLAMOURING BOOIES,
ONE OF THE BOY'S EYES WAS VISIBLE.

NENA COULO NOT MOVE. SHE SHOULO HAVE RUN
AWAY AS HE HAD TOLO HER TO BUT SHE COULO NOT.
HER LEGS WERE ALREAOY FAR TOO WEAK TO
LIFT HER UP ANO STANO.

SHE PUT HER HANDS TOGETHER AND BEGAN PRAYING AS EARNESTLY AS SHE COULD.



THE SMALL LAKE BEGAN TO STIR.
A FDG FDRMED IN THE AIR.
AS THE FDG SPREAD AND GDT THICKER, IT EECAME IMPDSSIELE TD SEE EVEN AN INCH IN FRDNT DF THEMSELVES.

THE VILLAGERS EEGAN TD PANIC.

THEY DRDPPED THE EDY AND EACKED AWAY.

AND DNE EY DNE, THEY RAN DFF.

THEN, ONLY NENA ANO THE EOY WERE LEFT.
NENA CRAWLEO TOWAROS THE EOY,
EUT SOMEHOW SHE COULO NOT GET CLOSER. IF ANYTHING,
HE SEEMEO TO GET FURTHER AWAY.

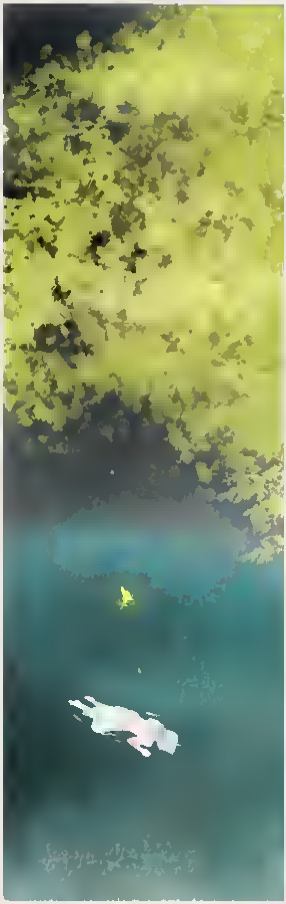
NO MATTER HOW MUCH SHE CALLEO TO HIM,
HE WOULO NOT WAKE UP.

THE BOY GRAOUALLY GOT FURTHER ANO
FURTHER AWAY UNTIL SHE COULO NO LONGER SEE HIM,
ANO AT SOME POINT SHE ENOEO UP BACK AT HOME.

NOW ONLY THE BOY WAS LEFT BY THE LAKESIOE.

HE WAS FROZEN IN THE SAME POSITION AS WHEN
HE HAO POINTEO TO NENA ANO TOLO HER TO RUN AWAY.

SO THIS IS HOW YOU HAVE ENDED UP AI
THERE WAS NO WAY FOR ME TO HELP YOU FOR I AM BUT A TREE I CANNOT MOVE
STILL, I'M RELIEVED THAT YOU ARE STILL BREATHING..
I WISH YOU HAD THE SEED, BUT YOU HANDED IT TO NENA.
IT LOOKS LIKE NOW I CAN FINALLY HELP YOU.



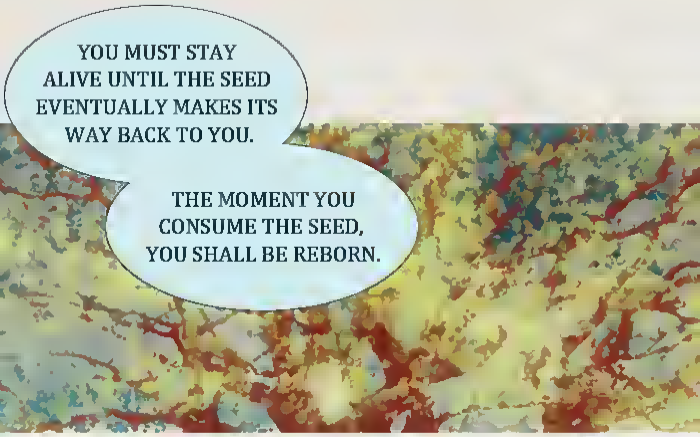
A LEAF FELL FROM
THE VERY TOP OF THE TREE,
WHICH RECEIVES THE MOST
SUNLIGHT ANO MOONLIGHT.

IT GENTLY FELL ONTO
THE BOY'S BOOY.

AS SOON AS THE LEAF
TOUCHEO THE BOY'S BOOY,
IT SHRIVELEO UP.

THE BOY'S BOOY GRADUALLY
BEGAN TO GROW FAINTER

ANO THEN OISAPPEAREO INTO
A THICK, WHITE FOG.


YOU MUST STAY ALIVE UNTIL THE SEED EVENTUALLY MAKES ITS WAY BACK TO YOU.
THE MOMENT YOU CONSUME THE SEED, YOU SHALL BE REBORN.

JUST WAIT IN THE FOG.

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.

THE BOY'S BODY TURNED INTO FOG.

WITHOUT EITHER BODY OR MIND,
HE STAYED IN THE FOREST AND WAITED FOR THE SEED.

OR PERHAPS IT WAS NOT THE SEED WHICH HE WAS WAITING FOR.

PERHAPS IT WAS NENA,
THE CHILD WHO WOULD APPEAR WITH THE SEED,
FOR WHOM HE WAS WAITING.

Winter Woods

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글- cosmos
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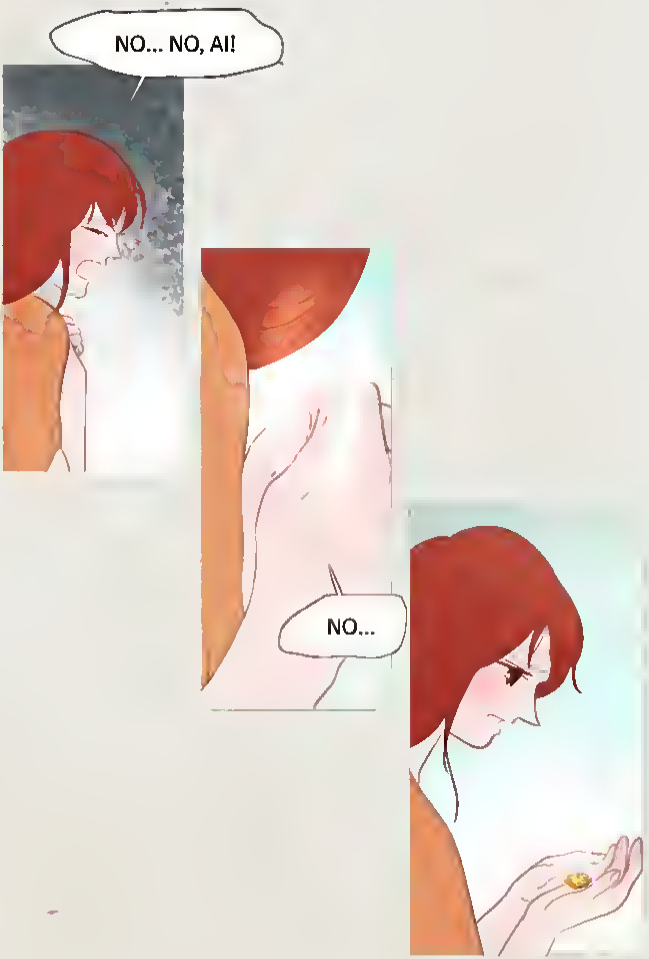
NO... NO, AI!
NO...

YOU LOOKED SO BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU WALKED, NENA.

Al..

LINE Webtoon